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LITTLE DAN.

ESTHER T. HOUSH.

[In a lovely home in ——— a little boy of three years was found asleep, with his arms around the necks of his father and mother, who had both died of the yellow fever, during the scourge of 1879.]

Where the skies of summer bending
O'er the homes in sunny clime,
All the charms of nature lending
Melody to summer rhyme;
There, 'mid vines of beauty dressing
Bowers of light, and love and joy,
Lived and loved, in love's caressing,
Little Dan the Southern boy.

Shadows fall where sunlight lingers,
And the fitful fever king
Chained the lives with icy fingers
That to happy childhood cling;
Sealed the lips of mother-blessing,
Stilled the heart of father-care,
Twined his arms in mute caressing,
Little Dan was sleeping there.

Eyes unused to kindly weeping
Turned aside a tear to hide,
As the orphaned boy lay sleeping
By the dear, dead mother's side.
Hands grew gentle as they bore him,
But he wakened with a cry—
"Mamma, papa, have you left me?
Mamma, Mamma, did you die?"

Swift the news on wires was flying
From the Southland stricken sore,
And the heavy air was sighing
With the plaintive tale it bore,
Then 'twas a woman's heart that answered
Where the Northern river ran:
"I will be a mother to him,
I will care for little Dan."

—Woman's Magazine.

The Lily Spirits.

The great crimson lilies had all day long opened their cups to the sun. They grew by the fountain, and blossomed in security, for in that deserted, high-walled garden, no child's feet ever ran up and down, no child's hand was ever stretched out to break one flower from its stem. The windows of the gloomy house were always closed. Weeds disputed the soil with the rare shrubs that had been set there years before, and with the sample flowers that sowed themselves year after year in the same spots. There were whole beds of small, deep purple pansies, and of crimson and yellow polyanthuses that once had only edged the walks. The blush roses had established a little kingdom of fragrance, and in June they breathed their life out toward the dark old house. The lilies of the valley had one corner all to themselves, and bloomed there as sweetly as they had done when there were merry-hearted children to look between their leaves for the first signs of coming blossoms. Pinks sturdily held their place among the grass and weeds that tried to root them out. Field daisies had taken possesion of the plots that hand once been the tulip beds. Tall grasses shot up their arrowy heads beside the fountain that had once sent its waters high into the air, but that now was dry, except when sudden and heavy rains filled its basin for an hour or two. Then the lilies growing on its margin, would catch a glimpse of themselves as they bent over the water, and would seem to take a deeper crimson at the sight.

I shall not tell you how long this old house and garden had been deserted, nor why they had been deserted. The flowers did not care for that; they needed no tending. They had the dew, and the sunshine, and the rain, and their colors were as bright, and their fragrance was as sweet as if many gardners had given them constant care.

But the garden was not always to remain deserted. One day an old woman and a little girl entered the house, and the daisies under the dining room window heard them say that in a few days some of the rooms were to be put in order, and that the little girl was to live in them until she was a woman. Then the child's voice cried:

"Oh! what a beautiful garden! Please, dear nurse, let me go and play in it."

"Very well," replied the nurse, "it is a good place for you to play in, but I don't see much beauty in such a tangle of weeds. You can have it made into a pretty place if you like."

Then the door opened and the sound of a child's tread was heard along the moss-grown paths, a sound that sent a happy thrill through the deserted place.

The lillies of the valley had done ringing their bells for that year, and the polyanthuses had dropped their blossoms. It was too late in the year for them; but some roses still remained, the pinks were in all their glory; the daisies had just begun to bloom, and the lillies by the fountain had opened their great crimson cups that very day. All the garden, from the rarest and tallest shrub to the commonest creeping vine was beautified by the afternoon sunshine. The four poplars at the end of the garden, threw their long, tender shadows towards the fountain, and in one of the shadows the child, after peeping into every corner of the garden, stopped to rest. Now she saw the lillies.

"Oh, you beauties!" she exclaimed "you are the prettiest flowers in the whole garden?" and she ran and peered into them.

Then the fountain caught her attention. She stepped into its shallow basin, and looked at the stone figure with the head of a woman and the body of a fish, that lay in the middle of the basin.

"Oh! what a lovely, lovely place!" she cried. "I wish I could stay here always."

She sat down at the edge of the fountain and looked at the lillies.

"How tired I am she thought, "and how quiet everything is. I can hear the rustle of the poplar leaves, and the chirp of the crickets, but that is all. I will shut my eyes for one minute and see how still I can feel."

She closed her eyes, and all at once there was dead silence. Even the faint rustle of the poplar leaves died away, and the cricket that was singing loudly a moment before, stopped right in the middle of a chirp. Then she heard a voice call softly:

"Little Alice! little Alice!"

"Here I am, nurse," she answered, without opening her eyes.

"Little Alice! little Alice! called the voice again, and this time Alice did open her eyes, and look towards the spot whence the voice seemed to come.

What had happened? The garden was the same and yet not the same that it had been a moment or two before. There was the stone mermaid of the fountain with the grass growing up around her. But a strange, soft, rose-colored light lay over everything, a light that was not steady like the sunlight, sometimes rosier, sometimes paler. It gave a warm tint to the pebles in the dry basin of the fountain, and colored even the sky. Alice could not see her nurse, and when she tried to rise and go away she found that she could not stir.

"Well, this is funny," she thought, "I feel as if I were turned into a lily myself with my feet sticking in the ground."

With this thought she looked toward the lilies that she had been admiring a few moments before. A change had come over them too, and, what is very wonderful, this was the cause of the change in everything else. The lilies were a deeper crimson, and their petals quivered as if they had life. Out of them came a rosy tremulous vapor, that circled around the blossoms, and then floated away, coloring all the atmosphere. The topmost lily of each stalk had suddenly grown larger, and as Alice looked at them, strange, beautiful faces appeared above them for an instant, and then vanished in the vapor.

Alice was so dizzy that she closed her eyes. When she opened them again, the lilies were no longer quivering; the vapor no longer curled around them. Beside each lily-stalk stood a graceful figure that seemed to be part of the lily, and yet separate from it. Their long robes floated to the ground; their faces were sweet and calm, yet seen through the rose colored vails that enveloped them, they were strangely varying. One instant they were like human faces, another, they were somewhat like lilies.

Then Alice heard a low, sighing sound. She thought it was the wind in the poplars, but no; when she looked at them, they were perfectly still. The sound grew louder until it seemed to Alice that all the air was full of sighs. She looked again towards the figures and knew, though she could not see their lips move that they were speaking. Soon the sigh changed into a low murmur, which, after a moment, subsided. Then the voice that had called her, sounded again, and Alice knew that it was the voice of the tallest and most beautiful figure.

"We are flower spirits," it said. "We dwell in the lilies, and are a part of them. Year after year they have blossomed, and we have been unable to separate ourselves from them, and to come into the sunshine. We needed some warm human sympathy to loosen the fetters that bind us to the lilies. The stone woman of the fountain has been our only companion, and summer after summer, we have breathed out our longing in fragrance, till the blossoms have withered away. But to-day, when for the first time in many years, a child's pure presence has come near us, and a child's sweet breath has touched us, we have gained our liberty for one happy hour. Now we must vanish."

"Oh, no! stay with me!" cried Alice, as the lilies quivered again, and the robes of the flower spirits began to change into wreathes of rose-colored vapor.

"We cannot," answered the voice. "Our time is nearly passed. We may appear again; at least, as long as your heart is that of a little child, we can influence you. When you visit us, and inhale our fragrance, we shall breathe to you many wonderful and beautiful things. The pure heart can always hear the voice of the flowers."

Fainter and fainter grew the voice, more and more tremulous became the lilies; higher and higher curled the vapor. Alice covered her eyes with her hands. Then just as if it had never stopped, the chirping of the cricket went on. The poplar leaves rustled again. A bird on the other side of the garden wall began to sing.

She uncovered her face. The sun was shining; there was no rose colored vapor—no, not even a rose colored cloud in the sky. The shadows of the poplar trees lay longer and darker on the grass. One fell across the stone mermaid. The lilies lifted their broad cups to the sunlight. There was no wind to stir them.

Alice went thoughtfully to the house. She found her nurse sitting on the stone steps that led to the garden, and to her she told her the story of the lilies. When Alice had done, the old woman laid her hand softly on the little child's head, and looked into her eyes. "Yes, my darling," she said, "it was a wonderful dream."

"No, nurse," replied Alice, it was true; I saw it all."

"It was a dream." replied the old woman, "it was a beautiful dream, but it had something true in it. The great thing in this life is to keep the heart of a child."—A. D. A.

How the Children Denied Themselves

Tom and Bessie were at the seashore, "having the grandest time in the world," as they expressed it. It was their first visit there, and of course everything was very new and wonderful to them. They thought they would never get tired looking at the sea and watching the breakers come tumbling in to break in a line of white foam on the beach. Then they enjoyed digging on the clean sand, making wonderful forts and castles.

"Such splendid sand," Tom wrote to his mother. "A fellow can play in it all day and not get dirty."

Their aunt had brought them to spend a couple of weeks with her, and although it was the first time they had been away from their mother, they were not a bit homesick. How could they be homesick when they were having such a splendid time?

They had had a splendid long letter from her (the first one, for they had only been there three days). On the last page she had written something that had made Bessie's tender heart ache and had set her thinking very seriously.

"I am so glad my dear children are enjoyihg themselves so much!" mamma wrote. "I went to see a poor little sick boy this morning. He is just about Tom's age, and his name is Tom, too. He is a cripple, and has to sit in his little chair all day.

He is too weak to move around much, even on his crutches, and very thin and pale—not at all like my rosy-cheeked Tom. The doctor thinks a visit to the country or the seashore during the hot weather might save his life, but his mother is too poor to think of such a thing. How I wish he could be where my Tom is!"

This was all their mother said about him; but it was enough to make Bessie think whether there might not be something that she could do, or Tom, to give this poor boy a visit to the seashore.

"What makes you so quiet Bessie?" asked Tom as they were walking along. Besssie was so absorbed in thought that she did not notice that her dolly had nearly fallen out of its little carriage.

"I am so sorry for that poor little sick Tom," she answered.

"So am I," responded Tom. "I'd give anything to have him here a little while."

"Would you really?" asked Bessie, "for I have thought of something we could do, only it would be awfully hard."

"Why, what could we do?" exclaimed Tom in surprise.

"If auntie is willing, we might go home next week, and let the little boy come in our place. He could stay for two wooks for what auntie has to pay to keep us here one week."

Tom was silent for a moment.

"Oh, we couldn't do that," he answered. "You wouldn't be willing to go h me a whole week sooner, would you?"

"I would like to save poor little Tom's life," answered Bessie. 'Won't you, dear Tom?' she pleaded.

It was some time before Tom could make up his mind. He was a generous, warm-hearted boy, but this way really a great sacrifice for him to make. It took all little Bessie's most eloquent pleading for the poor little cripple to win his consent. When they finally made up their minds they ran home to ask auntie about it.

She consented willingly, glad to see that her little nephew and niece would give up their own pleasure to do a kind act.

The rest of the week seemed to pass all too quickly to the children; but they did not regret their decision, and the day that mamma came to take them home she brought the poor little cripple with her. He was so thin and wan that Bessie's eyes were filled with tears as she looked at him, and Tom was more than repaid for his share of the sacrifice by the little fellow's delight and gratitude.

It was wonderful to see the change that just two weeks of good food, sea air and kind nursing made in him. He did not look like the same boy, and even after his return home he kept on getting stronger and better.

He came to see the children the day he returned, and after he had gone, Bessie said, "Tom dear ar'nt you glad?"

"Yes, indeed I am," answered Tom, warmly. Then he added shyly: "Bessie, it's true isn't it, that it is more blessed to give than to receive?"—Canadian Presbyterian.

Quicksilver and its Uses.

Most boys and girls have seen a thermometer, and yet I hardly believe that one of them could tell how heat and cold are measured in this little tube of glass by means of the metal called quicksilver.

You have noticed that the warmth of the room causes it to rise in the tube, and if you were to put it outside the window it would sink as well.

This, of course, is only when it is entirely protected from the air, otherwise the tube would be useless.

But why does it do this rising and falling? Because the quicksilver is very sensitive to the heat and cold. If the weather is warm it expands and so rises in the glass tube while the least coolness in the air causes it to contract or draw itself into a smaller space.

The barometer is another instrument in which quicksilver is used.

It is intended to measure the weight of the air; therefore the quicksilver must be exposed to the pressure of air. Common barometers have it inclosed in a small leather bag at the back of the instrument. This you cannot see, only the tube that is connected with it.

When th weather is pleasant the air, contrary to the general idea, being heavier, pressrs against this little bag, and the quicksilver rises in the tube. When the atmospher is damp, the pressure being less; the metal sinks.

You will wonder, perhaps, how the name quicksilver was given to this substance. The people who lived many hundred years ago and who discovered it, gave it the name. They not only called it quicksilver, but "living silver," because it seemed to them a real live thing, so many strange changes did it pass through under their experiments. If they attempted to pick it up it would always slip through the fingers, so they thought it must be alive; and when thoroughly shaken, it became a fine powder, and separated into millions of globules. They believed that it had the faculty of swallowing any other metal, while powerful heat caused it to disappear entirely.

It is now known among metals as mercury, and is the only one found in a liquid state. Gold, silver, iron, lead, and copper are all hard metals, as you know. Some of them can be chipped off with a knife, but they could not be dipped up unless they were melted Even mercury can be frozen so hard as to be hammered out like lead, and sometimes takes the form of square crystals; and it can also be made to boil, and then it sends off a colorless vapor.

Gold and silver are so mixed up with the rock in which they are found that it takes a great deal of time and expense to separate them and mercury (or quicksilver) is not always easily obtainted, although invaluable in separating the metal from the rock.

Quicksilver forms part of a soft, red rock called cinnabar, is crushed and exposed to the heat, when the metal, in the form of vapor, passes into a vessel suitable for the purpose, were it is cooled. Then, being reduced to its liquid state, it is pure and fit for use.

When men working in the mines heat the rocks, the quichsilver will sometimes roll out in drops as large as pidgeon's eggs, and fall on the ground in a million sparkling globules. It is said to be very beautiful against the dark-red rock, glittering everywhere with this "living silver," while every crack and crevice is also filled with it.

Just as wood floats on water, because it is lighter, so large stones thrown into a kettle of mercury would float on top, it is so much more heavy substance than the stone.

From what I have told you, you will see that quicksilver is not a common metal. There are only four important localities where it is obtained—California, Peru Austria and Almaden, in Spain. The nearest mines to us are those in California.

The mines in Peru were discovered in a curious manner. Cinnabar, when ground very fine, makes a beautiful red paint. The Indians used this to ornament. This caused the country where they lived to be examined, and the cinnabar was found.

The Romans used this paint hundreds of years ago in decorating their images and painting their pictures. It is of great value now in our times, and we call it vermillion.

We have said that this wonderful quicksilver is useful in separating metals from the rocks to which they cling.

These rocks are crushed fine, sifted, and washed until as much of the gold and silver is removed as possible. Then it is placed in a bottle with the quicksilver, which seems to absorb it at once, separating it entirely from every particle of sand or rock.

If the metal to be cleaned is gold, you will see a yellowish mass of a sort of paste or amalgam. This is heated, and the mercury or quicksilver flies way, leaving behind it pure gold.

It was only after years of patient toil and very many unsuccessful attempts, that this wonderworking processs was brought about.

Not many years ago, near the rich gold mines of California, there were discovered large mines of quicksilver. Previous to this all the quicksilver had to be shipped to this country from foreign shores which made it very hard to obtain, and very expensive.

Now, the tables are turned. For we, after supplying our own demand, can supply other countries ourselves plentifully.

Although mercury is so useful in many ways, it is also a deadly poison, and its vapor so dangerous that in the search for it many persons have lost their lives.

Not many years ago the mines of Austria took fire and thirteen hundred workmen were poisoned, many of them dying in consequence, and the water used to quench the flames, pumped into a river near by, caused all the fish in the river to die.

Have you ever seen mercury carried about? It is put in sheepskin bags and cast iron bottles. It is so heavy that, instead of an ordinary cork, an iron stopper is used—screwed in!

Sometimes these bags do sad havoc, as in the case of a storage of several in the hold of a ship, bringing to this country. Some of the bags leaked. Everybody on board was poisioned. Every bit of metal was covered with a silver coating of quicksilver.

Mercury is also used as a medicine. You have doubtless heard of blue pills and calomel. They are both prepartions of mercury or quicksilver.

Now, when you look at the thermometer, that it may give you an account of the weather, be it hot or cold, the barometer, too, whether, damp or dry, I hope you will not forget what you have been told in regard to their construction nor the various uses to which quicksilver is put.

A Generous Girl.

He was a bouncing big turkey, and they hung him up by the heels so that his nose almost touched the walk just outside the butcher shop. A little girl was standing there watching it. You could see that she was a hungry little girl and worse than that, she was cold too, for her shawl had to do for hood and almost everything else. No one was looking, and so she put out a little red hand and gave the great turkey a push, and he swung back and forth, almost making the huge iron hook creak, he was so heavy.

"What a splendid big turkey!"

The poor little girl turned around and there was another little girl looking at the turkey too. She was out walking with her dolls, and had on a cloak with real fur all around the edges, and she had a real muff, with little black spots over it.

"Good morning, miss," said the butcherman. You see, he knew the little girl with the muff perfectly well.

"That's a big turkey, Mr. Martin."

"Yes," said the poor girl timidly; "he's the biggest I ever saw in my life. He must be splendid to eat."

"Pooh!" said the little girl with the muff; "he isn't any bigger than the one my papa brought home for Thanksgiving to-morrow, I know."

"What! haven't you a whole turkey?"

"Never had one in my life," said the poor little girl.

"Then you shall have this one," said the little lady with the muff. "Mr. Martin, I've got some money in my savings bank at home, and my papa said I could do just as I wanted to with it; and I'm going to buy the turkey for this little girl."

The poor little girl's eyes grew so very large you would not have known them: "I shall love you always so much—so very, very much, and I'll go home for Foxy to help. Foxy is my brother, and I know we can carry him."

I have not room to tell you all about it; but the poor little girl got her turkey and papa his bill.

"What's this?" said he—"another turkey; eighteen pounds; three dollars and sixty cents."

"That's all right, said the little girl who had the muff. "I bought him, and gave him to a poor little girl who never ate one; and the money is in my iron bank."

The bank was opened, and there were just four big pennies in it.

A very generous little girl was this of whom the New York Tribune tells us this story; but, like some others of us, she was generous with the money of some one else.

SCHOOL REPORTS.

Fourth monthly report of Pleasant Ridge school, district No. 1, township 62, range 16, for the month commencing Dec. 28, 1885, and ending Jan. 19, 1886:

Number of pupils enrolled for the month 23; average daily attendance 17; average number of days attendance by each pupil 13; number of days taught 17. The names of the pupils who have been present every day during the month are: Alice Bell, Eddie Harris, Wilber Harris, Arthur Houghton, Henderson Houghton, Fogle Von Faikenstine and Clifton Falkenstine. The names of the visitors are: Mrs. C. J. Houghton, Mrs. J. Hill, Mrs. A. Hunsaker, Mrs. P. J. Sharr, the Misses Etta Falkenstine, Emma Munn, Mary Bell, Sophia and Effie Hunsaker, Rosa Robinson, and Clyde Scriven, Messrs Byrd M. Linder, Amos Miller, George Harris, Wm. H. Sullivan, Thomas Scrivens, Albert Bell, Samer Hill, Nathaniel Hankins, Theodor Hunsaker, John Robison and Gustava Boring.

TERM REPORT.

For the term commencing Oct. 5th, 1885, and ending Jan. 19th 1886; number of pupils enrolled 26; average daily attendance 18; average number of days taught 74; the names of the pupils who have been present every day during the term are: Fogle Von Falkenstine and Clifton Falkenstine. The visitors are too numerous too mention.

REMARKS—The term closed a little prematurely on the account of the school house and furniture being considerably damaged by a fire which originated from a defective flue, three days before the appointed time for school to close. The dinner and entertainment appointed for the close of course did not take place. We would return our hearty thanks to patrons and friends of the school for the support given us during the term. May heaven's choicest blessings ever attend them on life's journey.

J. O. TRUITT, Teacher.

The children should be taught and trained to be prompt, to be truthful, to be honorable in their conduct in school and on the playground, to be just in the expression of an opinion of a topic or a person.